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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Release Monday, July 26, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FOOD AND DRUG REVIEW." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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Homemakers, from now on, when you buy gauze bandages represented as "sterile" or "sterilized," you will have a right to expect that these articles will be free from germs.

Just recently, reports our Washington correspondent, the Court has upheld the stand of the Federal Government that such bandages, so represented, should in fact be free from germs. The Federal Court for the Southern District of New York has decided that the bandages manufactured by a certain company in Bridgeport, Connecticut, were drugs, subject to regulation under the Federal Food and Drugs Act, and that because they were contaminated with bacteria, they were both adulterated and misbranded.

Quoting our report directly: "When the bandages were seized by Federal authorities, counsel for the claimant contended that such articles were not 'drugs' within the definition of that term as used in the Federal Food and Drugs Act, and that therefore the law does not apply. The definition classified as a drug 'any substance or mixture of substances intended to be used for the cure, mitigation, or prevention of disease.'

"The Government presented evidence to show that gauze bandages are used for packing and dressing wounds, draining infected wounds, packing to stop bleeding, and various other similar uses. The Court held that gauze bandages rightly come within the statutory definition of 'drug.' Especially is this true, said the Court, of a bandage labeled 'Prepared for Surgical Use', as in this case.

"The decision of the court, which judicially defines a bandage as a drug, gives support to the campaign carried on during the past year against unsterile articles of this sort, masquerading as sterilized. During that period, the Federal Food and Drug Administration has caused seizure of more than 5,000 packages of absorbent cotton, nearly 7,000 packages of bandages, 28,000 adhesive compresses, 90 packages of adhesive plaster, 35 first-aid kits containing unsterile cotton and bandages, and 6,000 gauze pads."

So much for the first item in today's report, which assures us that gauze bandages represented as "sterilized" will have to be free from germs, under the law.

Now let's look over the list of routine seizures of foods and drugs made by the Food and Drug Administration during the month of May.

"Maple sirup -- 113 gallons -- were removed from the market because the product was contaminated with lead from the buckets in which the maple sap was collected. Raisins -- 862 shipping cases of raisins -- were seized because they

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contained enough hydrocyanic gas, a fumigant, to make them injurious to health. But raisin-loves need not worry. Last month saw the completion of the clean-up started when the Food and Drug Administration discovered that shippers were using hydrocyanic gas as a fumigant, during delays caused by the recent maritime strike on the Pacific Coast.

"Dirty crab meat was another food product seized during May -- more than one thousand pounds of it. Other seafoods removed from the market included dried codfish, canned shrimp, and canned salmon. These foods were either not so good as they should have been, or the cans were slack filled.

"A large lot of pecans in shell, more than 100,000 pounds, damaged by smoke, were also seized. Other food seizures included 400 pounds of rancid pecan meats, more than a thousand pounds of moldy sugared dates, 942 cases of canned beets, and various amounts of other canned products. There's scarcely a food product consumed in the home, sold in interstate commerce, that does not at some time or another fall short of Government standards, and thus automatically become a violation of the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

"Drugs, as well as food products, figured in routine seizures during May.

"One product, 'Ice Mint,' was offered for some twenty different ailments. Another, 'Le-Vim,' containing a laxative drug, nux vomica, and a phosphorus compound, was offered for the relief and correction of malnutrition, languidness, and frailty in men, women, and children.

"Another drug product removed from the market during May was 'Lund's Magic of the Grape', containing water, glucose, and twenty percent grape juice, represented as pure grape juice. This product, 'Lund's Magic of the Grape,' was offered for the treatment of colds, rheumatism, emaciation, overweight, sleeplessness, cancer, congestion, and stomach, liver, kidney, intestinal, lung, or bladder troubles.

"Well, it seems that we always have these worthless cure-alls with us. As soon as one is removed from the market, for violation of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, another fraudulent and worthless product comes in to take its place, and in due course it also is removed from the channels of interstate commerce."

In concluding her report, our correspondent says that nineteen court cases were ended last month. Fines for violating the Food and Drugs Act ranged from \$25 to \$500.

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